THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS AND WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): (a) and (b) The recommendations of the Report of the National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector are under consideration of the Department in consultation with concerned Ministries/State Governments.

Revision of railway freight and fare structure

119. SHRI VISHWASRAO RAMRAO PATIL.
SHRI YASHWANT SINHA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have considered the recommendations of the National Transport Policy Committee (NTPC) for revision of the existing railway freight and fare structure;

(b) if so, whether any systematic approach has been made to rationalise the existing freight and fare structure in order to meet the requirements of NTPC's recommendations; and

(c) what are the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD): (a) to (c) The National Transport Policy Committee (NTPC) made general observations on the pricing policy of the Railways and these have been kept in view while revising the fares and freight rates from time to time.

Import of centre buffer couplers and draft gears by the Railways

120. SHRI ASHOK NATH VERMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railway workshops and Railway engine/wagon factories are presently purchasing centre buffer couplers and draft gears from local manufacturers;

(b) whether there is any proposal to import these parts; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof and if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD): (a) Yes, sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) 5100 nos. of High Tensile Couplers and draft gears have been ordered, with provision for transfer of technology.

Testing of nuclear weapons by Pakistan in Chinese territory

121. SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news report which appeared in the Statesman of 14th January, 1989, to the effect that Pakistan proposes to test its nuclear weapons in Chinese territory;

(b) what is the nature of the nuclear weapons proposed to be tested by Pakistan; and

(c) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (PROF. K. K. TEWARI): (a) to (c) Government are aware of Chinese assistance to Pakistan in the nuclear field but

have no confirmed evidence to substantiate this particular report. The Chinese government have denied the report stating that China does not stand for nuclear weapon proliferation and does not help other countries to develop nuclear weapons. Government keep under constant review all developments having a bearing on India's security.

Soviet pull-out from Afghanistan

122. SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what progress has so far been made in the planned pull-out of Soviet Troops from Afghanistan; to what extent it has been impeded by Pakistan's support to the Afghan rebels (Mujahidins) during the past three months and what is Government's assessment of the situation relating to the prospects of peace in the Sub-Continent; and

(b) whether there has been any remarkable change in the activities of the rebels and the Pak support thereto since the induction of the new democratically elected Government headed by Mrs. Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (PROF. K. K. TEWARI): (a) By 15th February, 1989 all Soviet troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan, in accordance with the terms of the Geneva accords. A political solution alone, to the worked out by the Afghans themselves, taking into account the existing realities, can restore peace and normalcy in Afghanistan and contribute to the reduction of tensions in the region.

(b) No, Sir.

Discussion on Punjab terrorists with Pakistan

123. SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the Prime Minister's visit to Islamabad (Pakistan) in connection with SAARC meeting in December last, the Pakistan Prime Minister Mrs. Bhutto assured that effective steps would be taken to prevent any further use of Pakistan territory by Punjab terrorists and supply of arms and training to them through Pakistan; and

(b) if so, in what precise terms the issue relating to prevention of terrorist activities through Pakistan came up and what understanding was reached in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (PROF. K. K. TEWARI): (a) and (b) During Prime Minister's visit to Islamabad, the Pakistan Prime Minister Ms. Benazir Bhutto assured him of her commitment to the policy of non-interference in our internal affairs. It was also decided that the Home Secretaries of the two countries would meet in the first half of 1989 to discuss terrorism and releated issues.

Pakistani Prime Minister's proposal on Kashmir Issue

124. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a reported statement of Pakistani Prime Minister Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, as reported in the Hindustan Times of January 12, 1989, to the effect that a solution of the so called Kashmir issue was necessary for total normalisation of Pak relations with India;

(b) if so, whether the Pak Government has made any proposal towards the solution of the issue;

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto; and